



Discussion Guide - Draft Lower Athabasca Integrated Regional Plan

A Workbook to Share Your Views with
the Government of Alberta



ISBN No. 9778-0-7785-9384-3 (Printed Version)
ISBN No. 978-0-7785-9385-0 (Online Version)
Pub No. I/512
Printed March 2011



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Introduction

We all remember Alberta's economic and population growth up to the middle of the last decade. That growth was especially keen in the oil sands area and its communities, but was felt across the province. There was a clear need to better manage growth and development, so jobs don't come at the expense of the environment, communities can provide the homes and services people need and agricultural land can still grow crops instead of condos.

We created the *Land-use Framework* to set a new direction for land management, one that co-ordinates land-use decisions, considers the combined impact of activities and recognizes the need for conservation and stewardship. The framework proposes not one plan, but seven—one for each region based on and named for a major watershed. Planning by region will be more responsive to area resources, ecosystems and human needs.

A plan for the Lower Athabasca Region was the first priority, to address issues of oil sands development, community growth, economic diversity, ecosystem health and people's quality of life.

The Lower Athabasca Regional Advisory Council was established to provide advice, insight and perspective on current and future land-use activities and challenges in the region. The Council provided its *Advice to the Government of Alberta Regarding a Vision for the Lower Athabasca Region*, available at landuse.alberta.ca. Over the fall of 2010, government consulted on the vision document with Albertans. Summaries of these consultations are available at landuse.alberta.ca.

The feedback received through the consultations, plus the Regional Advisory Council's advice, have informed the development of the Draft Lower Athabasca Integrated Regional Plan (referred to in this document as the Draft Plan, but also known as LARP).

An opportunity to share your views –

This workbook is intended to ask for your feedback on the Draft Plan. To help inform the government's completion of the Draft Lower Athabasca Integrated Regional Plan you are encouraged to review ALL content of the draft LARP and the Proposed Lower Athabasca Integrated Regional Plan Regulations and provide comments in this workbook. This workbook can be completed on line at landuse.alberta.ca.

To submit printed versions of the workbook please mail to:

LARP Phase 3 workbook
Land Use Secretariat
9th Floor, 10035-108 Street
Edmonton, Alberta T5J 3E1

The workbook may also be submitted at any local Sustainable Resource Development office in the region.

The deadline for submissions of this workbook is **June 6, 2011**.

Overview of the Draft Lower Athabasca Integrated Regional Plan

The Draft Lower Athabasca Integrated Regional Plan sets a direction and vision for the region for the next 10 years, to support robust growth, vibrant communities and a healthy environment over the next 50 years. The final plan will be reviewed every five years and updated to maintain its relevance and effectiveness.

The plan will help guide provincial and local land-use decisions to better manage growth. It seeks to co-ordinate with and support municipal land-use decisions. Nothing in this plan changes private landowners' rights.

Throughout this discussion guide we will refer to the Draft Lower Athabasca Integrated Regional Plan as the "Draft Plan". Please refer to that document when guided to do so by page numbers, as below.

A **regional profile** describes the region in geographic, economic, environmental and human terms (Draft Plan pages 5–11). The vision sets a long-term view for the region (Draft Plan page 12). Economic, environmental and social **outcomes** (Draft Plan page 13) are supported by strategic directions (Draft Plan pages 15–22).

Objectives and strategies to implement the Draft Plan (pages 23–35) are backed by **monitoring and reporting** requirements (Draft Plan pages 36–41). The Proposed Lower Athabasca Integrated Regional Plan Regulations provides the necessary **regulatory accountability** being considered to support the Draft Plan.

Draft Plan Structure

Within the Draft Lower Athabasca Integrated Regional Plan there are three key components:

- **Strategic Plan** - includes the vision for the future of the region along with desired regional outcomes. It builds on existing policies and initiatives by establishing a set of strategic directions that help achieve the regional vision and outcomes.
- **Implementation Plan** - includes regional objectives, strategies and actions that will be undertaken to support achievement of the regional vision and outcomes, and indicators to measure and evaluate progress.
- **The Proposed Lower Athabasca Integrated Regional Plan Regulations** - enable achieving the strategic direction, strategies and actions.

Proposed Conservation and Recreation/Tourism Areas in Lower Athabasca Region

Conservation Areas

- Proposed Parks**
 - 1 Canadian Shield Wildland Park
 - 2 Richardson Wildland Park
 - 3 Gipsy - Gordon Wildland Park
- Proposed Public Land-use Zones**
 - 4 Birch River Conservation Area
 - 5 Dillon River Conservation Area

Parks for Recreation/Tourism Development

- Provincial Recreation Areas**
 - A Slave River, Cassette, Mountain & Pelican Rapids
 - B Andrew Lake
 - C Gardiner Lakes
 - D Gregoire/Willow Lake Expansion
 - E Christina Crossing
 - F Cowper Lake
 - G Crow Lake
 - H Steepbank Lake Complex
 - I Clyde/Wiau Lake Complex
 - J Winefred/Grist/Kirby Lakes
- Public Land Areas for Recreation/Tourism**
 - 1 Slave River South
 - 2 Lake Athabasca
 - 3 Richardson
 - 4 Athabasca River
 - 5 Clearwater River
 - 6 House River

- Lakeland Country Iconic Tourism Destination

Base Data

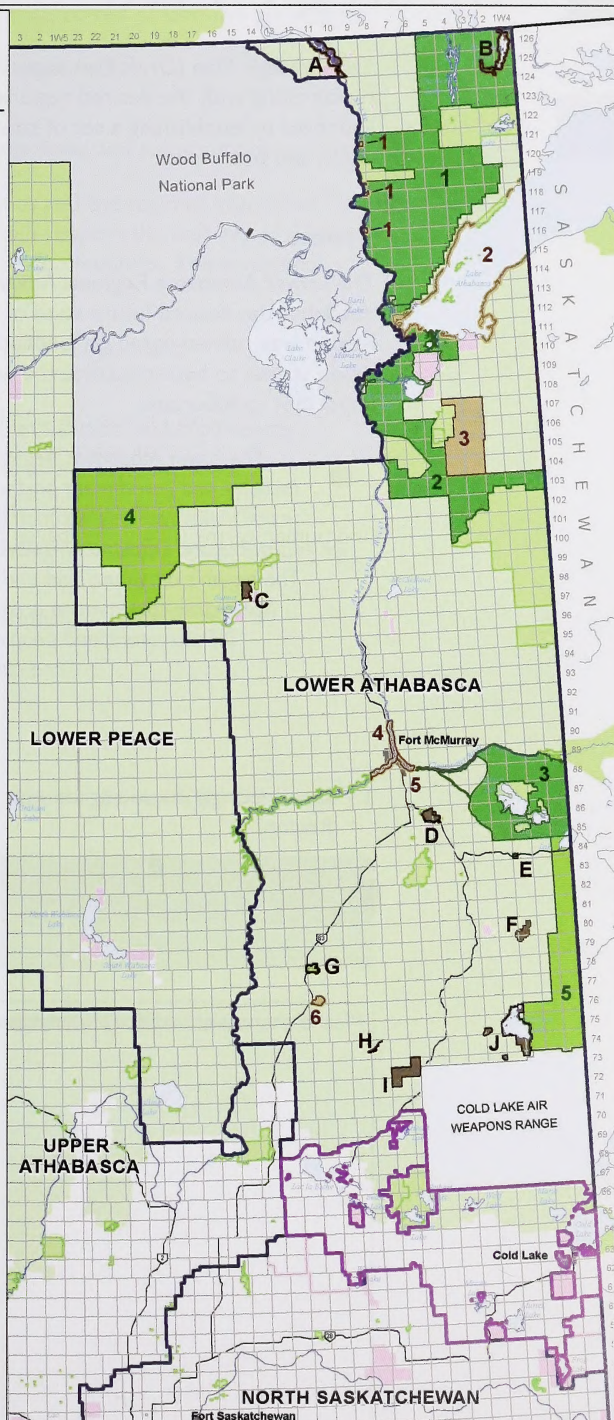
- Land-use Framework Regional Boundary
- Green Area
- White Area
- Existing Parks & Protected Areas
- National Park
- First Nations Reserves
- Métis Settlement
- Military Reserve
- Municipality
- Hydrography
- Provincial Roads



SOURCE INFORMATION:
 Proposed Conservation Areas: Alberta Tourism, Parks and Recreation
 Proposed Public Land-use Zones: Alberta Sustainable Resource Development
 Candidate Parks for Recreation/Tourism Development: Alberta Tourism, Parks and Recreation
 Lakeland Country Iconic Tourism Destination: Alberta Tourism, Parks and Recreation
 Indian Reserve: Alberta Sustainable Resource Development
 Parks & Protected Areas: Alberta Tourism, Parks and Recreation
 Base Map Data Provided by: Spatial Data Warehouse Ltd.
 Spatial Data Outside of Alberta: Natural Resources Canada (GeoGratis)
 Saskatchewan Parks & Protected Areas: Information Services Corporation of Saskatchewan

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Published Date: March 18, 2011
 Author: Land Use Secretariat





Strategic Plan

The Strategic Plan (Draft Plan pages 5-22) includes the vision for the future of the region along with the desired regional outcomes. It builds on existing policies and initiatives by establishing a set of strategic directions to help achieve the regional vision and outcomes.

Vision

The Lower Athabasca Regional Advisory Council proposed a vision. A vision describes the desired future state of the region. The vision for the Lower Athabasca Region was refined based on feedback received during consultation. The revised vision strives to better balance the economic, environmental and social values important to Albertans.

The Lower Athabasca Region is a vibrant and dynamic region. People, industry and government partner to support development of the region and its oil sands reserves. Economic opportunities abound in forestry, minerals, agriculture, infrastructure development, the service industry, and tourism. The region’s air, water, land and biodiversity support healthy ecosystems and world class conservation areas. Growing communities are supported by infrastructure, and people can enjoy a wide array of recreation and cultural opportunities.

1. How strongly do you agree with the proposed vision for the Lower Athabasca Region?

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please share any additional comments on the **Vision**:

Outcomes:

The *Land-use Framework* identified three provincial outcomes of land-use planning:

- Healthy economy supported by our land and resources;
- Healthy ecosystems and environment; and
- People-friendly communities with ample recreational and cultural opportunities.

To support achievement of the provincial outcomes and the regional vision, the Draft Plan identifies seven regional outcomes which support the delivery of a healthy economy, healthy environment and people-friendly communities. These regional outcomes describe what we wish to achieve.

1. The economic potential of the oil sands resource is optimized.
2. The region's economy is diversified.
3. Landscapes are managed to maintain ecosystem function and biodiversity.
4. Air and water are managed to support human and ecosystem needs.
5. Infrastructure development supports economic and population growth.
6. The quality of life of residents is enhanced through increased opportunities for recreation and active living.
7. Aboriginal peoples are included in land-use planning.

1. How strongly do you agree these outcomes support the vision for the Lower Athabasca Region?

Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please share any additional comments on the **Regional Outcomes:**

Strategic Directions

Objectives describe what must be done to achieve the vision and regional outcomes. Strategies describe regulatory and non-regulatory approaches that will be used to achieve each objective. The Draft Plan identifies seven strategic directions that will improve our ability to balance economic, environmental and social outcomes in the region.

Strategic Direction:

Improving integration of industrial activities (Draft Plan pages 15–16)

Oil sands development is expected to continue to be the region's main employer and economic driver. Forestry, conventional petroleum and natural gas, minerals, agriculture, tourism and other sectors are active on the same land base, contribute to the diversification of the region's economy and provide employment opportunities in the region. Working together to reduce their combined impact on the land will make the best use of our land and natural resources and lessen the impact on the environment. Some companies already integrate their land use voluntarily, for example, by sharing resource roads and infrastructure. The Draft Plan proposes integrated land management between industrial operators on public land as a necessary element of doing business. This will result in better co-ordination of industrial activities such as shared road networks and infrastructure on public lands; reducing land disturbance to productive forest land base; minimizing timber shortfalls; and minimizing environmental impacts.

How strongly do you agree with this strategic direction?

Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please share your comments:

Strategic Direction:

Encouraging timely and progressive reclamation (Draft Plan page 16)

Alberta law requires that land be reclaimed when industrial operations are completed. Oil sands mines can operate for decades and it is not practical or desirable to wait until activities are complete before starting reclamation.

The new progressive reclamation strategy for oil sands mining will require that disturbed lands that are no longer in use be reclaimed in a timelier manner. As portions of an overall site are reclaimed, progress will be publicly reported. These reclaimed lands represent opportunities to support biodiversity, forestry, recreation and other uses.

A new tailings management framework for mineable oil sands operations will be developed by 2012. The framework will provide guidance on managing tailings to provide assurance that fluid fine tailings will be reclaimed as quickly as possible, and the volume of fluid tailings will be reduced. The framework will establish regional limits.

How strongly do you agree with this strategic direction?

Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please share your comments:

Strategic Direction:

Managing air, water and biodiversity and minimizing land disturbance (Draft Plan pages 17–18)

The Alberta government is committed to managing cumulative effects at the regional level. Management frameworks are a new approach being used to accomplish this, where outcomes and objectives are set along with the strategies and actions to achieve them. These frameworks provide regional context within which decisions about future activities and management of existing activities should occur by establishing environmental limits and triggers. Limits in these frameworks are clear boundaries that are not to be exceeded. Triggers are to be used as warning signals to allow for evaluation, adjustment and innovation on an ongoing basis.

Government will use management frameworks to establish clear limits for air emissions, water quality and quantity to ensure air and water remain healthy for the region's residents and ecosystems (Draft Plan Schedules C- E, pages 52–56). The frameworks outline monitoring and reporting requirements, set early warning triggers to determine the need for action and identify what actions may be taken. For example, changes may be made to current and/or future development. Management frameworks for air quality, surface water quality and groundwater have been completed. The water quantity framework for the Lower Athabasca River will be updated by 2012.

A new biodiversity management framework will set targets for regional biodiversity indicators and identify strategies to maintain vegetation, aquatic life and wildlife, including woodland caribou. A new regional land disturbance plan for the Green Area will introduce a land disturbance limit with pre-limit management triggers to address the targets established through the biodiversity management framework. Limits will be regional, but will recognize local variations, for example, to protect caribou habitat. A regional land disturbance plan will be developed by 2013. These plans will allow us to better manage land disturbance to support our economic outcomes, while achieving biodiversity goals through a well co-ordinated, planned and managed environmental footprint.

How strongly do you agree with this strategic direction?

Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please share your comments:

Strategic Direction:

Designating new conservation areas (Draft Plan pages 18–20)

Conserved lands help achieve environmental objectives, especially for biodiversity, by maintaining ecological systems and processes for future biodiversity and creating benchmark areas for assessing ecological integrity. Existing wildland provincial parks already conserve six per cent of the region. The Draft Plan proposes to conserve another 16 per cent of the region (Draft Plan Schedule A, pages 42-43). The new conservation areas and existing parks and protected areas will result in more than two million hectares of legislatively protected conserved lands in the region supporting wildlife movement and habitat stability.

These conservation areas were chosen based on their size, biodiversity, lack of industrial activity and ability to support aboriginal traditional uses. Most are large, intact and interconnected areas of Boreal forest. Some conservation areas include important caribou habitat. Some areas will allow limited vegetation disturbance within international guidelines. An example is low impact forest practices with the primary goal being protection and maintenance of biodiversity and ecosystem function (not commercial timber production).

Low-impact recreation and tourism, hunting, fishing and trapping will continue. Motorized recreation will be limited to existing designated trails. Some types of activities, such as oil sands, metallic and industrial and commercial forestry will not be allowed. Tenures subject to cancellation will be compensated in accordance with existing legislation. Existing petroleum and natural gas tenure will be honoured. Surface access for any new convention petroleum and natural gas tenures will not be allowed (Draft Plan Schedule B, pages 44–51).

How strongly do you agree with this strategic direction?

Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please share your comments:

Strategic Direction:

Strengthening infrastructure planning (Draft Plan pages 20–21)

It is critical that Alberta attracts and retains a skilled workforce required to support our economic outcomes. Attracting and retaining skilled workers depends in part on meeting the need for social and physical infrastructure. Government has started Comprehensive Regional Infrastructure Sustainability Planning (CRISP) for the Athabasca and Cold Lake oil sands areas. The CRISP will make recommendations for necessary infrastructure in the region based on expected population levels at certain oil sands production levels. This approach will enable regional infrastructure needs to be anticipated as regional economic and population growth occur over time.

How strongly do you agree with this strategic direction?

Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please share your comments:

Strategic Direction:

Providing new recreation and tourism opportunities

The Draft Plan creates 10 new provincial recreation areas (Draft Plan Schedule A, pages 42-43). These areas have been selected based on their desirability for recreation, their proximity to population centres and their ability to offer connectivity to conservation areas where possible.

Recreation and tourism, hunting, fishing and trapping will continue in these new parks. Motorized recreation will be limited to existing designated trails, except for Gregoire/Willow Lake Expansion and Crow Lake Expansion where motorized access is not allowed. Some types of activities, such as oil sands, metallic and industrial and commercial forestry will not be allowed. Tenures subject to cancellation will be compensated in accordance with existing legislation. Existing petroleum and natural gas tenure will be honoured. Surface access for any new petroleum and natural gas tenures will not be allowed (Draft Plan Schedule B, pages 44-51).

How strongly do you agree with this strategic direction?

Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

The Draft Plan proposes six new areas of the region with unique features or settings be designated as public land areas for recreation and tourism to meet the growing demand for recreation and provide a land base for tourism investment (Draft Plan Schedule A, pages 42-43). Existing land uses will continue in these areas while private sector partnerships develop, manage and promote the new tourism destinations (Draft Plan Schedule B, pages 44-51).

How strongly do you agree with this strategic direction?

Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Lakeland Country has Alberta's highest density of quality recreational lakes; sandy beaches; fish and wildlife; and scenery that is currently under-realized for tourism. The Draft Plan proposes that Lakeland Country be planned and developed as an iconic tourism destination, in collaboration with local stakeholders (Draft Plan Schedule F, page 57).

How strongly do you agree with this strategic direction?

Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please share your views:

Strategic Direction:

Including aboriginal peoples in land-use planning (Draft Plan page 22)

The Alberta government is committed to consulting with aboriginal peoples when government decisions may adversely affect the continued exercise of their constitutionally protected rights.

The Draft Plan proposes a new initiative. Government will invite First Nations who have expressed an interest in Richardson's Backcountry to be involved in a sub-regional initiative called the First Nations Richardson Backcountry Stewardship and Tourism Initiative, or Richardson Initiative.

The government will work with First Nations to identify other potential tourism and cultural opportunities, including Quarry of the Ancestors, Bitumount and Fort Chipewyan.

How strongly do you agree with this strategic direction?

Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please share your comments:

Implementation Plan

With the directions established, we can look at implementing the plan. This is the main business of the plan—to identify specifically what the plan expects to accomplish (objectives), how to do that (strategies) and how to measure progress (indicators). The objectives, strategies and indicators are presented under each regional outcome. For full details, see the Draft Plan (pages 23–59).

Regional Outcome 1:

The economic potential of the oil sands resource is optimized (Draft Plan pages 24–25).

Strategies:

- Alberta already has a strategy, the **Alberta Provincial Energy Strategy**, and a plan, **Responsible Actions: A Plan for Alberta's Oil Sands**. Together, these provide a long-term action plan for clean energy production, wise energy use and economic prosperity. The Draft Plan proposes to continue implementing the provincial energy strategy and action plan.
- Alberta's regulatory system is being made more efficient, performance-based and competitive, while maintaining high environmental standards. The Draft Plan proposes to continue implementing these **improved regulatory processes**.
- Alberta developed the **Building and Educating Tomorrow's Workforce** initiative to develop worker knowledge and skills, and to retain and attract workers. The Draft Plan proposes to continue implementing this workforce development initiative.
- Under the **Aboriginal Development Initiative**, government is working to increase the participation of aboriginal communities and businesses in the region's economy. The Draft Plan proposes to continue implementing this initiative.
- The oil sands resource is of economic value only if markets can access it. The Draft Plan proposed to identify critical economical **linkages to markets**.

How adequately do you think this suite of strategies will meet the regional outcome to optimizing the oil sands' economic potential?

Very	Somewhat	Not Very	Not At All	Don't Know
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Is the Draft Plan missing important strategies to support optimizing the oil sands resource potential?

Are there any implementation considerations we should be aware of?

Indicators:

How appropriate is each of the following indicators for informing on the progress being made towards achieving oil sands resource optimization?

Indicator	Very	Somewhat	Not Very	Not At All	Don't Know
Regional labour force by sector					
Provincial royalties					
Personal income					
Oil sands production					
Cost of production					
Investment and capital					

Please share any additional comments you have on the above indicators:

Regional Outcome 2:

The region's economy is diversified (Draft Plan pages 25–28).

A healthy economy can't depend on one industry. Forestry, agriculture, tourism and energy and minerals create jobs, support businesses and communities and diversify the region's economy.

Objective:

Prevent future shortfalls in the timber supply.

Strategies:

- Industrial and commercial operators voluntarily integrate their land use to minimize the loss of productive forest land. The Draft Plan proposes making **integrated land management** a necessity, requiring operators on public lands to share major access roads, share infrastructure such as camps and remote air strips, and quickly remove linear disturbances such as survey cutlines.
- The Draft Plan proposes forest industry identify opportunities to **intensively manage forest stands and regeneration** to improve the growth rates.

How adequately do you think this suite of strategies will meet the objective?

Very	Somewhat	Not Very	Not At All	Don't Know
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Is the Draft Plan missing important strategies to prevent future shortfalls in the timber supply?

Are there any implementation considerations we should be aware of?

Indicators:

How appropriate are each of the following indicators for informing on the progress being made towards achieving the prevention of future shortfalls in timber supply?

Indicator	Very	Somewhat	Not Very	Not At All	Don't Know
Area of public land actively managed for intensive forestry					
Area of land disturbance on productive land base on public land in the region.					

Please share your comments:

Objective:

Maintain and diversify the region's agricultural industry.

The Draft Plan recognizes that municipalities are in the best position to plan and direct development to limit conflicts with agriculture, limit impacts of other land uses on agriculture and reduce the fragmentation of agricultural lands on private lands.

Strategies:

- Municipalities take a broad view of land use in their jurisdictions. The Draft Plan encourages municipalities **to identify areas** where agricultural and associated activities should be the primary use of land.
- Urban growth has the potential to convert agricultural land to residential, commercial and other urban uses. The Draft Plan encourages municipalities to **limit the fragmentation** and conversion of agricultural lands, especially where they identified agriculture as a primary land use.
- The Draft Plan proposes that, where possible, municipalities are encouraged to direct urban development to lower quality agricultural land or where it **will not constrain agriculture activities**.
- Even if it's not on agricultural land, some urban development can still affect agriculture. The Draft Plan encourages municipalities to **minimize conflicts between intensive agricultural operations and other land uses**, for example, by using setback distances.

How adequately do you think this suite of strategies will meet the objective?

Very	Somewhat	Not Very	Not At All	Don't Know
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Is the Draft Plan missing important strategies to support the region's agricultural industry?

Are there any implementation considerations we should be aware of?

How appropriate is the following indicator for informing on the progress being made towards achieving the objective?

Indicator	Very	Somewhat	Not Very	Not At All	Don't Know
Fragmentation and conversion of agricultural land to non-agricultural land uses					

Please share your comments:

Objective:

Tourism potential of the region is optimized.

The region has great potential for tourism and recreational development. New tourism opportunities would bring in tourism and recreational investment that now is being lost to other jurisdictions.

Strategies:

- Lakeland Country has great tourism features—deep, clear lakes; sandy beaches; fish and wildlife; and high value scenery. The Draft Plan proposes that **Lakeland Country** be planned and developed as an iconic tourism destination, in collaboration with local stakeholders. (See Draft Plan Schedule A – LARP Digital Map, pages 42-43; and Schedule F – page 57 for details.)
- A competitive tourism industry and quality outdoor recreation both depend on attractive features, settings and scenery, and on providing access. The Draft Plan proposes that government work with the private sector and local governments to **enhance and expand** the supply of public and private sector tourism attractions, activities, amenities and accommodations.
- The Draft Plan proposes that government identify, designate and market regional **tourism development nodes** in consultation with stakeholders, municipalities and aboriginal peoples.
- The Draft Plan proposes that government engage with aboriginal peoples and complete **tourism opportunity assessments** for the Quarry of the Ancestors, Bitumount and Fort Chipewyan.
- The Draft Plan proposes that government work with municipal governments and other partners to establish and promote a **scenic byways network** to showcase the region's unique scenic resources.

How adequately do you think this suite of strategies will meet the objective?

Very	Somewhat	Not Very	Not At All	Don't Know
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Is the Draft Plan missing important strategies to support the tourism potential of the region?

Are there any implementation considerations we should be aware of?

Indicators

How appropriate are each of the following indicators for informing on the progress being made towards achieving the tourism potential of the region?

Indicator	Very	Somewhat	Not Very	Not At All	Don't Know
Visitation					
Visitor expenditure					

Please share your comments:

Objective:

Opportunities for the responsible exploration, development and extraction of energy, mineral and coal resources are maintained.

Natural gas produced in the region supports the production of oil sands. Exploring for, developing and extracting minerals and coal are also an important part of the region's economy.

Strategies:

- The Draft Plan proposes that rules regarding **physical access to energy, mineral and coal resources** are clear to ensure economic development opportunities and the environmental concerns are appropriately considered against other land uses.
- The Draft Plan proposes that policies be developed that **promote new investments** in energy, mineral and coal resource development.

How adequately do you think these strategies will meet the objective?

Very	Somewhat	Not Very	Not At All	Don't Know
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Is the Draft Plan missing important strategies to support the responsible exploration, development and extraction of energy, mineral and coal resources?

Are there any implementation considerations we should be aware of?

Please share your comments:

Regional Outcome 3:

Landscapes are managed to maintain ecosystem function and biodiversity (Draft Plan pages 28–30).

The Lower Athabasca Region contains diverse landforms, vegetation and species. Maintaining this biodiversity is an important environmental objective. Healthy ecosystems are essential for supporting human life.

Objectives:

- Enhance the regional network of conservation areas to support biodiversity and ecosystem function.
- Regional biodiversity objectives are developed for various indicators of terrestrial and aquatic biodiversity in the region.
- Land disturbance impacts to biodiversity should be avoided or mitigated.
- Enhance the rate of reclamation and reduction of tailing ponds.

Strategies:

- Biodiversity and ecosystems evolved under natural and unspoiled habitat conditions. The Draft Plan proposes to increase the amount of provincial Crown land under a **conservation designation**. (For details, see the Draft Plan Schedule A – LARP Digital Map, pages 42-43; and Schedule B – LARP Land Use, pages 44–51.)
- Some species of plants, fish and wildlife adapt well to small or temporary changes in their environment, but others—like the woodland caribou—are more sensitive and affected more dramatically. The Alberta government is committed to keeping native species on the landscape. The Draft Plan proposes that government develop a **biodiversity management framework** for public land in the Green Area by 2013. The framework would identify biodiversity reference areas, biodiversity targets and indicators (measures) and provide strategies to address caribou habitat needs, maintain native vegetation and maintain aquatic ecosystem function and connections among watercourses.
- Land disturbance has the greatest single impact on habitat and ecosystems. The Draft Plan proposes that government develop a **land disturbance plan** for public land in the Green Area by 2013. The plan will include disturbance limits and pre-limit triggers to address biodiversity targets in the biodiversity management framework. A shift from voluntary to necessary integrated land management will help implement new disturbance limits. The plan will also identify strategies for the Athabasca River Corridor north of Fort McMurray.
- To support effective management of tailings, the Energy Resources Conservation Board issued a directive to oil sands mines to reduce the volume of mature fine tails present on facility sites. The Draft Plan proposes that a **tailings management framework** be completed for the Lower Athabasca Region.

- Reclamation is required by law when industrial activity ends, but oil sands mining sites can be in operation for decades. The Draft Plan proposes the implementation of the new **progressive reclamation strategy** which promotes timely reclamation, enhanced certification process, a transparent public reporting system and a new progressive reclamation financial security program.

How adequately do you think this suite of strategies will meet the regional outcome of maintaining ecosystem function and biodiversity?

Very	Somewhat	Not Very	Not At All	Don't Know
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Is the Draft Plan missing important strategies to support maintaining ecosystem function and biodiversity?

Are there any implementation considerations we should be aware of?

Indicators:

How appropriate are each of the following indicators for informing on the progress being made towards achieving the regional outcome?

Indicator	Very	Somewhat	Not Very	Not At All	Don't Know
Status of Alberta species, including species at risk					
Area of land disturbance (by type) on public land in the region					
Status of biodiversity indicator					
Land area retained in native vegetation					
Area of oil sands reclamation					
Volume of fluid tailings					

Please provide your comments:

Regional Outcome 4:

Air and water are managed to support ecosystem and human needs (Draft Plan pages 30–33).

The Alberta government is committed to managing the cumulative effects of development on air and water at the regional level. This approach focuses on achieving outcomes, understanding the effects of multiple developments (existing and new) on air and water; assessment of risk and collaboratively working with and sharing responsibility for action with those who affect the quality of our air and water.

Feedback from consultants indicates Albertans strongly support the need to develop and implement management frameworks for air and water.

Air

Objective:

Releases from various sources are managed so that they do not collectively result in unacceptable air quality.

Strategies:

- Alberta has developed an Air Quality Management Framework for the Lower Athabasca Region that sets objectives, air quality limits and triggers, monitoring requirements and actions if a trigger or limit is been reached. Actions will involve the provincial government and other parties—for example, industry and municipalities. The Draft Plan proposes that the **Air Quality Management Framework for the Lower Athabasca Region** be implemented. (Details on limits and triggers are in Schedule C of the Draft Plan, page 52.)

Indicators

How appropriate is each of the following indicators for informing on the progress being made towards achieving the objective?

Indicator	Very	Somewhat	Not Very	Not At All	Don't Know
Nitrogen dioxide (NO ₂)					
Sulphur dioxide (SO ₂)					

Please provide your comments:

Groundwater

Objectives:

- Groundwater quality is protected from contamination by maintaining conditions within the range of natural variability and not exceeding established limits.
- Groundwater resources continue to support human and ecosystem needs, and the integrity of the regional flow system is maintained.

Strategies:

- Government developed the Groundwater Management Framework for the Lower Athabasca Region that includes interim triggers, monitoring requirements and actions if a trigger or limit has been reached. Actions will involve the provincial government and other parties—for example, industry and municipalities. The framework also requires the preparation of facility groundwater management plans by industrial operators. The Draft Plan proposes that the **Groundwater Management Framework for the Lower Athabasca Region** be implemented. (Details on the interim quality triggers are in Schedule D of the Draft Plan, page 53.)

Indicators

How appropriate is the following indicator for informing on the progress being made towards achieving the objective?

Indicator	Very	Somewhat	Not Very	Not At All	Don't Know
Groundwater quality (see Draft Plan Schedule D, page 53)					

Please provide your comments:

Surface Water

Objective:

Water quality in the Lower Athabasca River is managed so current and future water uses (protection of aquatic life, drinking water, recreation and esthetics, agricultural and industrial) are protected.

Strategies:

- Government developed a Surface Water Quality Management Framework for the Lower Athabasca River. The framework includes limits, triggers, monitoring requirements and actions if a trigger or limit is been reached. Management actions will involve the provincial government and other parties—for example, industry and municipalities. The Draft Plan proposes that the **Surface Water Quality Management Framework for the Lower Athabasca River** be implemented. (Details on surface water quality limits and triggers are in Schedule E of the Draft Plan, pages 54-56.)
- The Draft Plan proposes that the **surface water quantity management framework** for the Lower Athabasca River will be updated.

Indicators

How appropriate is the following indicator for informing on the progress being made towards achieving the objective?

Indicator	Very	Somewhat	Not Very	Not At All	Don't Know
Surface water quality (see Draft Plan Schedule E, pages 54–56)					

Please provide your comments:

Are there any implementation considerations on management frameworks we should be aware of?

Regional Outcome 5

Infrastructure development supports economic and population growth (Draft Plan pages 33–34).

The rapid rate of growth in the Lower Athabasca Region is expected to continue for the foreseeable future. A proactive approach to planning for infrastructure and urban growth is needed to ensure the region is an attractive place to live and do business.

Objective:

The region's infrastructure and land base available for development are planned to facilitate population and economic growth.

Strategy:

- Government is taking a new approach to infrastructure planning for oil sands areas. The **Comprehensive Regional Infrastructure Sustainability Plan** (CRISP) process looks at anticipated oil sands investments and population growth. The Draft Plan proposes that government implement CRISP where oil sands development will create rapid growth and significant infrastructure pressures.

How adequate do you think this strategy is to meet the objective?

Very	Somewhat	Not Very	Not At All	Don't Know
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Is the Draft Plan missing important strategies to support the objective?

Are there any implementation considerations we should be aware of?

Indicators:

How appropriate are each of the following indicators for informing on the progress being made towards achieving the objective?

Indicator	Very	Somewhat	Not Very	Not At All	Don't Know
Oil sands projects: current, approved and pending					
Regional population					
Camp population counts					
Traffic counts					
Cost of construction					
Cost of living					
Rental affordability					

Please provide your comments:

Regional Outcome 6

The quality of life of residents is enhanced through increased opportunities for recreation and active living (Draft Plan pages 34–35).

A growing, prosperous and mobile population is changing the type of experiences people are looking for and putting more pressure on the land. More people are seeking outdoor recreational opportunities.

Objective:

Provide a wide range of recreation and tourism opportunities that meet the preferences of regional residents and visitors.

Strategies:

- The Draft Plan proposes to designate **new provincial recreation areas** to help meet the demand and to provide a land base for amenities such as campgrounds, day-use areas, boat launches, motorized and non-motorized trails and accommodations that also would support tourism. (For details, see Schedule A – LARP Digital Map, page 42: and Schedule B – LARP Land Use pages 44–51.)
- The Draft Plan proposes that new areas of the region with unique features or settings be designated as **public land areas for recreation and tourism** to meet the growing demand for recreation and provide a land base for tourism investment. (For details, see Schedule A – LARP Digital Map page 42: and Schedule B – LARP Land Use pages 44–51.)
- Designated trails provide for recreation in a way that respects the landscape and local biodiversity. The Draft Plan proposes the development of a **regional trail system** with routes and areas which link communities, destinations and other jurisdictions with the region’s parks and open spaces. (For details, see Schedule G in the Draft Plan pages 58–59.)
- **Regional recreation data** is being collected. The Draft Plan proposes completion of a regional recreation and tourism resource inventory, a scenic resource assessment inventory and a regional recreational demand and satisfaction survey. Data collected will inform recreational planning and priority infrastructure development on provincial Crown land.

How adequate do you think these strategies are to meet the objective?

Very	Somewhat	Not Very	Not At All	Don't Know
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Is the Draft Plan missing important strategies to support the regional outcome?

Are there any implementation considerations we should be aware of?

Indicators:

How appropriate are each of the following indicators for informing on the progress being made towards achieving the objective?

Indicator	Very	Somewhat	Not Very	Not At All	Don't Know
Satisfaction with recreational opportunities within the region					
Area/capita of parks or designated open spaces for recreation (provincial, municipal)					
Recreation infrastructure such as number of campsites, kilometers of designated trails					

Please provide your comments:

Regional Outcome 7

Inclusion of aboriginal peoples in land-use planning (Draft Plan page 35).

Objective: To encourage aboriginal peoples' participation in land-use planning and decision-making. This will provide both aboriginal communities and the Government of Alberta with a basis for better addressing current and potential land-use conflicts, in a manner supportive of aboriginal traditional uses, such as the exercise of treaty rights.

Strategies:

- Invite First Nations expressing an interest in the Richardson Backcountry to be involved in a sub-regional initiative called the **First Nations-Richardson Backcountry Stewardship and Tourism Initiative** (Richardson Initiative). The initiative would consider:
 - Fish and wildlife management, access management and economic/business opportunity.
- The Government of Alberta will continue to **consult with aboriginal peoples** in a meaningful way when government decisions may adversely affect the continued exercise of their constitutionally protected rights, and the input from such consultation continues to be reviewed prior to the decision.

How adequate do you think these strategies are to meet the objective?

Very	Somewhat	Not Very	Not At All	Don't Know
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Is the Draft Plan missing important strategies to support the regional outcome?

Are there any implementation considerations you would like to share?

Indicators:

How appropriate are each of the following indicators for informing on the progress being made towards achieving the objective?

Indicator	Very	Somewhat	Not Very	Not At All	Don't Know
Participation rate of First Nations in the sub-regional initiative					
Aboriginal peoples continue to be consulted when Government of Alberta decisions may adversely affect the continued exercise of their constitutionally protected rights, and the input from such consultation continues to be reviewed prior to the decision.					

Please provide your comments:

Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting

(Draft Plan pages 36–37)

Monitoring

The relevant government ministries will collect, store and monitor data to measure progress towards meeting the outcomes of the Lower Athabasca Plan. Data trends will identify changes in the region and will affect decision-making.

Evaluation

The monitoring data will be analyzed and compared to established targets, limits and thresholds. Where possible, government will seek the input of experts from industry, aboriginal communities, local governments and organizations and the stakeholder community. Every five years, the plan will be evaluated and the results will be reported publicly. Every 10 years, the regional plan will be subject to a comprehensive review, and may be amended or repealed.

Reporting

Public reporting will include the release of the five and 10 year reports, and any other reports or communications on the regional plan. Information will be posted on government websites.

Improving

Monitoring, evaluating and reporting encourage continuous improvements in decision-making and in actions to improve the balance between economic, environmental and social outcomes.

Please provide your comments:

Regulatory Details

The Lower Athabasca Integrated Regional Plan Regulations would include several components.

Part I Interpretation

This part of the regulations contains definitions, the legal interpretation and legal effects of the LARP Strategic Plan and the LARP Implementation Plan as they apply to the Crown, decision-makers, local government bodies and other persons as described in this part of the regulations.

The LARP Strategic Plan is intended to inform and guide land-use activities within the region.

The LARP Implementation Plan directs decision-makers and government departments to do certain things to meet the objectives of the regional plan.

The LARP Strategic Plan and the LARP Implementation Plan must be taken into consideration by decision-makers in the exercise of their powers, duties and functions, but they are not legally binding like legislation.

The regulations would be legally binding on the Crown, decision-makers, local government bodies and other persons.

This part also requires local governments to review and update their municipal plans to align with the LARP within five years; and within two years for government decision-makers.

Please provide your comments:

Part 2 Conservation of Ecosystems

This part of the regulations defines the land and biodiversity conservation requirements of the regional plan and includes three divisions:

Division 1 - Conserved Land

This division sets out the types of lands that would be defined as conserved lands. It requires that government, through the Designated Minister, monitor and report on the amount of conserved land.

Division 2 - Conservation Areas

This division sets out the considerations a decision-maker must take into account with respect to issuing or renewing statutory consents in conservation areas. This division also identifies the conservation areas the Minister of Sustainable Resource Development and the Minister of Tourism, Parks and Recreation are directly responsible for under this division. The requirements for the Designated Minister to establish and maintain programs to evaluate and report on the effectiveness of conservation areas in meeting regional plan conservation objectives are also described.

Division 3 - Biodiversity

This division describes the biodiversity management framework which is anticipated to be completed within two years in the LARP Implementation Plan.

Please provide your comments:

Part 3 Effects Management

This part of the regulations includes three divisions which define air quality, surface water quality and groundwater quantity and quality management frameworks that have been established to help address cumulative impacts of development within the region. For the purpose of Part 3, the Minister of Environment is identified as the Designated Minister.

Division 1 - Air Quality

This division sets out the requirement to establish and maintain programs to manage ambient air quality limits and triggers for substances that are deemed to be indicators of air quality within the region. The Designated Minister is required to: regulate sources of substances in order to not exceed identified limits; establish triggers for management actions; and carry out monitoring, evaluation and reporting on ambient air quality in the region. Air quality indicator limits and triggers identified in the LARP Implementation Plan are incorporated into these regulations.

This division also sets out the requirement for management responses on the part of the provincial government when a trigger or limit has been exceeded and the requirement for reporting a management response.

Division 2 - Surface Water Quality

This division sets out the requirement to establish and maintain programs to manage surface water quality limits and triggers for substances that are deemed to be indicators of surface water quality in the Lower Athabasca River. The Designated Minister is to: regulate sources of substances in order to not exceed identified limits; establish triggers for management actions; and carry out monitoring, evaluation and reporting on surface water quality in the Lower Athabasca River. Surface water quality indicator limits and triggers identified in the LARP Implementation Plan are incorporated into these regulations.

This division also sets out the requirement for management responses on the part of the government when a trigger or limit has been exceeded and the requirement for reporting a management response.

Division 3 - Groundwater

This division sets out the requirement to establish and maintain programs to manage water quality limits and triggers for variables that are deemed to be indicators of groundwater quality within the region. The Designated Minister is required to: regulate sources of variables in order to not exceed identified limits; establish triggers for management actions; and carry out monitoring, evaluation and reporting on groundwater quantity and quality in the region. Groundwater quality indicator limits and triggers identified in the LARP Implementation Plan are incorporated into these regulations.

This division also sets out the requirement for management responses on the part of the government when a trigger or limit has been exceeded and the requirement for reporting a management response.

Please provide your comments:

Part 4 Recreation and Tourism

This part of the regulations defines public land areas for recreation and tourism and provincial recreation areas, and sets out the considerations a decision-maker must take into account with respect to issuing or renewing statutory consents. The requirements are also described to establish and maintain programs to manage scenic and recreational values and to evaluate and report on the effectiveness of these areas in meeting regional plan recreation and tourism objectives.

Please provide your comments:

Part 5 Coming Into Force, Related Amendments and Expiry

This part of the regulations sets out transitional rules for decision-makers regarding existing and new statutory consents once the regional plan comes into force. This part also specifies the date when the Lower Athabasca Regional Plan comes into effect, as well as the expiry date of the regulations.

Please provide your comments:

Schedules 1 to 5 provide additional detail regarding the designation of each of the declared conservation areas, transitional requirements about rescinding existing statutory consents and determination of possible compensation.

Please provide your comments:

Please share any additional comments you may have regarding the Lower Athabasca Regional Plan.

Where is your primary residence?

Alberta, in the Lower Athabasca Region	Alberta, outside the Lower Athabasca Region	Canada, in a province other than Alberta	Outside of Canada
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

What are the first three characters of your postal code?

Live outside of Canada

Do you currently work within the Lower Athabasca Region?

Yes	No
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Are you employed by or associated with any of the following? Check all that apply:

- | | |
|--|-----------------------|
| Public sector (federal/provincial/municipal government) | <input type="radio"/> |
| Industry (energy, forestry, agriculture, tourism and others) | <input type="radio"/> |
| Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) | <input type="radio"/> |
| An aboriginal community | <input type="radio"/> |
| Other | <input type="radio"/> |

To which age group do you belong?

- | | |
|---------------|-----------------------|
| 17 or under | <input type="radio"/> |
| 18 - 34 | <input type="radio"/> |
| 35 - 49 | <input type="radio"/> |
| 50 - 64 | <input type="radio"/> |
| 65 or greater | <input type="radio"/> |

Would like to be added to the LARP mailing list? If so, please enter your email address below. Your email address will not be used to identify your responses to any of the workbook questions.

"The collection of this personal information is authorized under section 33(c) of the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* and the privacy provisions of that Act will protect your information. Your personal information is being collected to allow the Land Use Secretariat to provide you with additional information about the Land-use Framework initiative.

If you have any questions about the collection or use of this information, please contact the Consultation Co-ordinator, Land Use Secretariat, 10035 - 108 St. Edmonton AB T5J 3E1 or by phone at 780-644-7974.

Thank you for sharing your views by completing this workbook.

To submit print versions of the completed workbook mail the workbook to:

LARP Phase 3 Workbook
Land Use Secretariat
9th Floor, 10035-108 Street
Edmonton, Alberta T5J 3E1

The workbook may also be submitted at any local Sustainable Resource Development office in the region.

The deadline for submission of this workbook is June 6, 2011.

Thank you!

Thank you for your comments and insights, and for having the interest and taking the time to complete this workbook.

Your comments and those of others who submitted a workbook by mail, in person or online, and who participated in consultation meetings and discussions will be considered by the Alberta government as it finalizes the Lower Athabasca Integrated Regional Plan

Watch for updates at the Land Use Secretariat website, at landuse.alberta.ca.

Additional Comments

Please reference the section or question you are making additional comments about.

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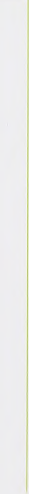


Additional Comments

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